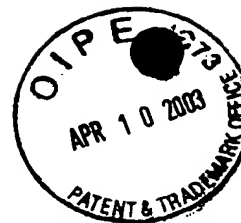


215106US3



#10/2m

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF: :
Katsuhiko SAITO, et al. : EXAMINER: LEO, L.
SERIAL NO: 09/977,426 :
FILED: October 16, 2001 : GROUP ART UNIT: 3743
FOR: HEAT EXCHANGER :

RESPONSE

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

RECEIVED
APR 11 2003
TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

SIR:

In response to the Official Action dated March 17, 2003, and supplemental to the Amendment filed on January 10, 2003, favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-9 are presently active in this case.

The Official Action indicates that the reply filed on January 10, 2003, is not fully responsive to the prior Office Action because "Applicants have not specifically pointed out why newly added Claims 3-9 are patentable over the prior art."

Claim 3 advantageously recites a heat exchanger comprising a plurality of refrigerant distribution parts. The heat exchanger includes a first continuous inlet space having an open end and a closed end and a first continuous outlet space having an open end and a closed end, where the first refrigerant path connects the first continuous inlet space and the first continuous outlet space. The heat exchanger also includes a second continuous inlet space having an open end and a closed end and a second continuous outlet space having an open

end and a closed end, where the second refrigerant path connects the second continuous inlet space and the second continuous outlet space. The first continuous inlet space, the first continuous outlet space, the second continuous inlet space, and the second continuous outlet space are defined as being formed by abutting openings of the adjacent refrigerant distribution parts, and the open end of the first continuous outlet space is connected to the open end of the second continuous inlet space by a conduit. None of the cited references discloses or suggests all of the limitations expressly recited in Claim 3, and therefore Claim 3 is patentable over the cited references. (See, generally, the arguments presented in support of Claim 1, in the Amendment filed on January 10, 2003.) With regard to the Torigoe et al. reference, note the configuration of spaces and the conduit defined in Claim 3, which are not disclosed in combination with the other features of Claim 3 in the Torigoe et al. reference.

Claims 4 and 5 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 3 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed, taught, nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 3.

Claim 6 of the present application advantageously recites a heat exchanger comprising a plurality of refrigerant distribution parts each having a first plate and a second plate defining a first refrigerant path and a second refrigerant path therebetween. The first refrigerant path connects a first continuous inlet space and a first continuous outlet space, and the second refrigerant path connects a second continuous inlet space and a second continuous outlet space, and the first continuous inlet space, the first continuous outlet space, the second continuous inlet space, and the second continuous outlet space are formed by abutting openings of the adjacent refrigerant distributions parts. The first continuous outlet space is defined as being connected to the second continuous inlet space by a conduit, and a cross-sectional flow area of the first continuous inlet space changes along a length thereof. None of

the cited references discloses or suggests all of the limitations expressly recited in Claim 6, and therefore Claim 6 is patentable over the cited references. (See, generally, the arguments presented in support of Claim 1, in the Amendment filed on January 10, 2003.)

Claims 7-9 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 6 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed, taught, nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 6.

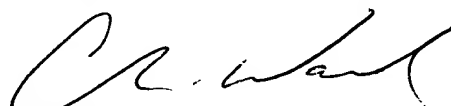
Consequently, in view of the above discussions, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Finally, the attention of the Patent Office is directed to the change of address of Applicants' representative, effective January 6, 2003:

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Respectfully Submitted,

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